

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-08 IO-13 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6295

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 5124

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EWWT, EEWT, UR, GW, SW, DA

SUBJ: USSR-WESTERN MARITIME RELATIONS

REF: (A) MOSCOW 3654, (B) 76 MOSCOW 15164

1. FOLLOWING ITEMS RE SOVIET MARITIME AFFAIRS EMERGED FROM APRIL 14 MEETING OF INFORMAL GROUP OF WESTERN EMBASSY OFFICERS IN MOSCOW CONCERNED WITH TRANSPORT.

2. THE MINISTRY OF THE MERCHANT MARINE (AVERIN) HAS TOLD THE FRG MINISTER-COUNSELOR (E/C) THAT THEMARCH 16 INTERVIEW OF MINISTER GUZHENKO IN LITERATURNAYA GAZETA WAS VERY IMPORTANT AND SHOULD BE READ AS A SIGNAL THE USSR WILL NOT RAISE TENSIONS IN INTERNATIONAL SHIPPING. (SEE REF A FOR EMBASSY REPORT ON IT.)

3. SWEDEN IS STILL SUFFERING PROBLEMS IN ITS SHIPPING RELATIONS WITH THE USSR DESPITE PAST INTERGOVERNMENTAL TALKS. THE PRINCIPAL PROBLEMS ARE GREAT IMBALANCES IN CARGO CARRIAGE, HIGH DEMURRAGE COSTS (DUE TO UNLOADING
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DELAYS FOR SWEDISH VESSELS IN SOVIET PORTS), AND RECEIPT OF ONLY 10 PERCENT OF MARINE CARGO INSURANCE COVERAGE BY SWEDISH COMPANIES (REF B). DISCUSSIONS HAVE BEEN HELD ABOUT ESTABLISHING A JOINT LINER SERVICE IN ORDER TO FACILITATE SERVICING OF SWEDISH SHIPS. THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE SUCCESS SO FAR IN RESOLVING ANY OF THESE MATTERS, AND THEY ARE NEXT TO BE DISCUSSED AT A MIXED COMMISSION MEETING TO

BE HELD IN MID-JUNE.

4. ACCORDING TO A DANISH GOVERNMENT PAPER RECEIVED BY THE DANISH EMBASSY HERE, DANISH SHIPOWNERS HAVE DECLINED THE GOVERNMENT'S OFFER TO REQUEST A MEETING OF THE MIXED COMMISSION UNDER THE 1973 DANISH-USSR MARITIME AGREEMENT TO DISCUSS CURRENT SOVIET SHIPPING PRACTICES. (THE COMMISSION HAS NEVER MET.) THE SHIPOWNERS WANT TO WAIT FOR THE RESULTS OF CENSA-SOVIET TALKS AS THEY PREFER A COORDINATED APPROACH. MORE IMPORTANTLY, THEY FEEL THAT THERE HAS NOT YET BEEN SIGNIFICANT HARM TO THEIR INTERESTS.

5. COMMENT: THE SWEDISH SITUATION ON MARINE INSURANCE IS A FURTHER INDICATION THAT THIS PROBLEM IS WIDESPREAD. WE WERE SOMEWHAT STRUCK BY THE ATTITUDE OF DANISH SHIPOWNERS WHICH SEEMS IN CONTRAST TO THE CONCERN ABOUT SOVIET SHIPPING PRACTICES GENERALLY EXPRESSED IN WESTERN SHIPPING CIRCLES. WE WOULD APPRECIATE ANY COMMENTS EMBASSY COPENHAGEN MIGHT HAVE ON THIS.
TOON

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